Hispaniola - hell or home? : Decolonizing grand narratives about intercultural interactions at Concepción de la Vega (1494-1564)

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3 ARCHAEOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGY: CHRONOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS AT CONCEPCIÓN

3.1 Introduction

A first methodological step in the analysis of intercultural interactions at Concepción has been the compilation of archaeological research to date. This chapter presents the archaeological and architectural interventions that have occurred at the Parque Histórico y Arqueológico de la Vega Vieja, with emphasis on the Dominican Parks Service excavations undertaken in from 1976 to 1995.

Previous, incomplete compilation attempts were included in Deagan (1999), Deagan and Cruxent (2002a, 2002b) and Kulstad (2008). The following compilation, presented in chronological order, includes information from the available excavation maps, blueprints, archaeological classification forms, and previous archaeological reports. It also highlights the limits and biases of those who have undertaken these interventions, and describes both sites and artifacts according to their terminology.

Although the 16th century town of Concepción de la Vega covered a large portion of the Valley of the Vega Real, contained within the larger Cibao Valley in the center of the Dominican Republic, the present compilation will focus on the excavated portion of its central urban location.

3.2 Frederick Ober (1892)

The first semi-systematic archaeological intervention at the fort was undertaken by Frederick Ober in 1892 (Ober 1893). He had been assigned as Commissioner of the Columbian Exposition of 1893, and one of his tasks was to collect artifacts to be exhibited from all around the Caribbean (Ober 1893). From Concepción he not only collected previously excavated material, but also spent a day excavating and photographing the site. He had plans to work for a week, but it rained during the rest of his stay (Ober 1893, 330).

Ober describes a large town site, scattered over a great area, with the most salient ruins being those of the fort, the church and a large convent (Ober 1893, 321). He postulated the fort to be 200 feet square, made of brick, and possibly having four bastions, and noticed that the surrounding houses were higher up on the slopes (Ober 1893, 321-323). He includes a picture of the fort bastion in his book (Ober 1893, 324), apparently taken before he has set workers to dig the angle of the fort. He does not specify what he recovered in the dig, with the exception of a hawks-bell (Ober 1893, 325). He also bought old iron and brass from the locals who believed there was a great treasure under the walls (Ober 1893, 325, 321). In the end he takes several hundred small artifacts with him for the Exposition (Ober 1893, 325). It is uncertain where these artifacts are today (Watters 2003).

3.3 Narciso Alberti Bosch (1912)

Narciso Alberti Bosch briefly mentions the Concepción site in his book, Apuntes Para la Prehistoria de Quisqueya (1912). Alberti Bosch, lived in modern La Vega, and is considered to be one of the pioneers of systematic archaeological work in the country (Hayward et al. 2009, 92; Samson 2010, 28). Concepción is mentioned as a reference point to the place called "Las Tembladeras" [The Shaky Ground], where volcanoes of mud were said to erupt. Meanwhile, he dedicates one whole chapter to Angelina, a site made of stone close to Cotui, but not found on any maps, and which he considered linked to ancient Greece (Alberti-Bosch 2011 [1912], 81-84).

3.4 Erwin Walter Palm (1945)

In 1945, Erwin Walter Palm, Section Chief for Colonial Archaeology (1948-1952) of the INDIA (Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Arqueológicas) at the Universidad de Santo Domingo (Boyrie 1960, 35), was the first titled archaeologist (graduate from Heidelberg University) to intervene at the site. Part of his research was to determine Concepción's layout in a search for the earliest manifestations of the Iberian Grid Town Plan (Palm 1955a, 46-47). He was unable to determine the town layout due to the lack of substantial remains (Palm 1955a, 46-47). He was, however, able to determine the main areas to be the remains of the Cathedral, the fort and an artisan well (aljibe) (Palm 1955a, 47-48). He determined the fort to be in the medieval tradition of the 16th century, such as those found in Jaen, Spain (Palm 1955a, 47-48). His physical impact was minimal since he only visited the site as part of his survey of Dominican monumental architecture (Palm 1950, 1952, 1955a, 1955b), and apparently did not dig.

3.5 University of Florida/Universidad de Santo Domingo/Grupo Guama (1950s)

Starting in 1952, Dominican archaeologist Emile de Boyrie of the INDIA of the Universidad de Santo Domingo, and University of Florida Professor John Goggin conducted archaeological research in the Concepción area to complement Palm's architectural investigations. They undertook a joint University of Florida (USA) / Universidad de Santo Domingo (DR) /Grupo Guama (Cuba) project in 1952 and 1953 (Boyrie 1960, 41; Goggin 1968; Kulstad 2008, 29). This investigation was documented in a film and a lecture presented in the 1954 Archaeology Congress in Santa Fe, New Mexico (Boyrie 1960, 44). Further excavations were undertaken in 1954, 1956 and 1958 (Boyrie 1960, 46, 54, 72; Goggin 1968; Kulstad 2008, 29).

Boyrie conducted surface explorations, surveys, measurements and mapping at Concepción with the purpose of declaring the site a National Monument and relocating the inhabitants away from the most archaeologically important areas (Boyrie 1960, 54, 72; Kulstad 2008, 29). All the collected material was brought to the Dominican National

Archaeology Museum, washed, and classified by the staff (Boyrie 1960, 34; Goggin 1968).

Meanwhile, for Goggin, this was part of a Caribbean-wide investigation in which he collected samples of different types of majolicas, particularly Spanish majolica types and olive jars. His interest started from an excavation at Fig Springs, Florida and the need to interpret his Spanish material findings (Goggin 1968). Due to the nearness of the Caribbean to Florida, and the early occupation of these islands, Goggin connected with Grupo Guama in Cuba, Emile Boyrie de Moya in the Dominican Republic, and Jose Cruxent in Venezuela to undertake joint research (Goggin 1968). Unfortunately, due to various political events in the Caribbean, his death, and later Boyrie's, his complete findings were not organized for publication. His findings were later edited by Irving Rouse and published by Yale University in 1968 (Kulstad 2017). This publication includes information about the extensive surface collection he carried out at Concepción. The ceramics he collected are stored at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

In 1959, after five years of work by the INDIA, Archaeologists Elpidio Ortega and Marcio Veloz Maggiolo decided to continue and expand the investigations (Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1971?). They conducted an area survey, topographic mapping and survey blueprints as part of a salvage plan for the site (Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1971?). However, this was stopped due to political upheaval (González 1977b, 1978).

3.6 1960s

During that decade the Concepción site was not studied. It reverted to its abandoned state and became a place for children to play, with goats living among the ruins and the fort bastion turned into a pigsty. It also became a depository of all types of human discard materials (González 1977b).

3.7 First Half 1970s

3.7.1 La Vega Vieja Site (1970)

In 1970, a group of prominent La Vega citizens of the time, including the Bishop, J.A. Flores, the governor, and the directors of the Museo de Casas Reales and Dirección Nacional de Parques de la República Dominicana tried to continue the 1959 project (González 1978). The modified project was included as one of the proposed areas of excavation for the collection of objects to be exhibited in the planned Museo del Hombre Dominicano (González 1978).

The project was to be undertaken by Elpidio Ortega and Marcio Veloz Maggiolo. The project started with the premise that La Vega Vieja (Concepción) had been built on a plateau that was being destroyed by erosion. The city center (around the fort) was the highest point of the plateau, with the main streets extending out from this main center

(Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1971?; Kulstad 2008, 97). Although approved, the proposal was not implemented until the site was declared of Public Utility in 1976.

3.7.2 Mellacoid Sites (1971, 1977)

Meanwhile, Elpidio Ortega, Marcio Veloz Maggiolo and Angel Caba began an archaeological survey of the Cibao area with the purpose of finding objects that could be exhibited in the forthcoming Museo del Hombre Dominicano (Veloz-Mggiolo et al. 1981, 8, 206). One site identified was the Rio Verde site, located less than 2km north of the Concepción site (Veloz et al. 1981, 205). The site was identified as Mellacoid. Two field seasons, one in 1971 and another in 1977, revealed 2 distinct phases, the Rio Verde and the Cutupu, with the latest radiocarbon date being AD 1025 (Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1981, 218, 239). Comparison to other radiocarbon dates from the rest of the island prompted Veloz, Ortega and Plinio Pina to propose that the Mellacoid had expanded from the eastern Cibao Valley to the west into Haiti, and south towards Santo Domingo (Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1981, 312). No efforts were made to compare the Indigenous materials found at the Rio Verde site with those found at Concepción at the time. It is unknown where the Rio Verde materials are stored.

3.8 July – Dec. 1976: Pre-Excavation Investigations

On July 6, 1976, President Joaquín Balaguer issued a Decree declaring the site to be of Public Utility and designated a Commission to undertake the archaeological work at the site (González 1979). There were three objectives to this work (Ortega 1976). The first was to unearth the built features and identify the type of urban layout. The second was to complete a map of the site, while the final was to develop tourism there (Ortega 1976). At that point in time, the site was considered to be contained within the areas of Pueblo Viejo, San Francisco, Carrera de Palmas and the Santo Cerro (González 1977b). However, before all of this could be accomplished, several pre-excavation investigations had to be undertaken (González 1977a, 1977b, 1979; Ortega 1976; Vásquez 1991), Grammetric aerial photography assessment; grid implementation; measurement and survey of the First Stage (88 ½ tareas - 1 tarea = 1.5 hectares); mapping; topographic survey; preliminary plans for restoration; archaeological level color bank; archaeological survey; cadastral survey and contour lines.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find any of the graphics or images related to this work. However, a short report by Ortega (1976) gives a summary of the results of the aerial photographic survey, the archaeological survey and the cadastral survey.

The aerial photographic survey, undertaken with the help of the Instituto Cartográfico Universitario, confirmed what had been stated in the 1971 proposal – that

Concepción had been built on a plateau. The area around the fort (possible city center) was the highest point of the plateau, with main streets extending out from this point (Kulstad 2008, 97; Ortega 1976). In addition, they found some areas with straight lines in the vegetation which they interpreted as having underlying walls, throughout the proposed city area. The central part of the city was identified (fort and Cathedral), as well as some peripheral parts (Monasterio de San Francisco). A possible cistern (aljibe) was also identified (Ortega 1976) (Fig. 4).

Ortega undertook three archaeological surveys during this period. According to Abreu (2015), these surveys were limited to the “Camino Real,” that is the path leading from the Carretera La Vega-Moca to the Aljibe, then turning left to the road which connects back to the Carretera-Moca (Camino al Aljibe) – roughly ½ km2 (Fig. 4). It is important to note that the main purpose of these surveys was to determine the level of the Spanish floors, that is, the floor of the stonemasonry buildings. This was determined to be between a meter and a half and 50 cm from the surface. It is stated elsewhere (Ortega 1977) that any excavation below this point would be too costly and time-consuming. In spite of this, the surveys yielded great amounts of materials, specially coins and ceramic sherds (Ortega 1976).

Although not stated in the Ortega 1976 report, it appears that this was when the Spiral Grid (see below) was measured and implemented, starting from the center of the Fort. The grid appears to have been measured in 5 x 5m squares (González 1978). In this system, each unit was assigned a number, beginning with 1 and increasing as it circled around itself clockwise. In this system, the number referred to the entire test unit rather than any particular point or corner (Cohen 1997a). It appears to have been measured out by an independent surveying company, given how it was later substituted for other grid systems by different archaeologists.

21	22	23	24	25	26
20	7	8	9	10	27
19	6	1	2	11	28
18	5	4	3	12	29
17	16	15	14	13	30

It is possible that the Spiral Grid was put in by the company that did the cadastral survey of the area (González 1978). They proposed the settled area to be at least 34,778 m2, extending between the Carretera Santiago-Moca and the Carretera La Vega-Moca and connecting with the Santo Cerro (Ortega 1976). They apparently did quite a few drainage level studies, but none of the resulting maps are available. Attempts at locating points on the Spiral Grid on the Concepción landscape have not been successful (Cohen 1997b, Woods 1998, 1999), present research included. However, it has been possible to locate the material excavated in the survey pits dug while using the Spiral Grid during this period, within the assemblage currently housed at the site.

It appears that the surveyors left some of their measuring and sighting bars in the ground, held in by cement (Pimentel 1978b). These were later used by other archaeologists to measure out excavation units (Pimentel 1978b), regardless of the nomenclature of their grids. This also means that all grids used at later dates at the site have the same starting datum point.

3.9 Fort Excavation July – Dec. 1976

3.9.1 Fort Excavation First Stage: Dec. 1976- June 1977

Although systematic excavations were officially started on Dec. 19, 1976, actual work was not started until January 1977, and only in the Fort area, or “campus” (Ortega and Fondeur 1982, 255). Although Architect Jose Gonzalez was the Director of the activities, at this stage much of the archaeological work seems to have been directed by Elpidio Ortega (González 1977b).

Ortega’s influence can be inferred by the imposition of a new grid system in the fort area coinciding with his research on the La Vega Vieja transcultural ceramics (González 1977b; Ortega and Fondeur 1982, 255) (Description of these ceramics in Chapter 6). This grid system was made up of 5m x 5m units (Cohen 1997a). The East-West axis was assigned numbers, and the North-South axis, letters of the alphabet. The test units were named for the cardinal point which intersected at the SW corner of the unit (Cohen 1997a). Line 1 was parallel to the Carretera La Vega-Moca, and Line “K” was perpendicular to a line that aligned with the base of the Fort wall (González 1977b). This intersection coincides with unit 1 of the Spiral Grid. This grid will be referred to as the “Ortega Grid” in this manuscript.

According to Ortega, excavations were started using an arbitrary stratigraphy of 25 cm levels, but later changed to natural stratigraphic levels (Ortega and Fondeur 1982, 255). However, this change is not so clear in the documents. This must have been difficult to control, given that Ortega only visited the site weekly, and most of the work was supervised by non-archaeologists (González 1977b).

A 1978 site report (Pimentel 1978b) records the excavation of 66 units (approx. 330 m2) during this period. Ortega (Ortega and Fondeur 1982, 255) states that all of these units were sifted.

All excavated material was bagged in the field (bags were both cloth and plastic) together with 2 cards (one interior and one exterior) indicating Unit #, strata, date, name of excavating technician and provenience (Pimentel 1978a).

During this stage, more emphasis was put on object recovery than on the recovery of context, basically an artifact-oriented approach (sensu Rouse 1977). This due to Ortega's interest in the recovery of the transcultural ceramics denominated as La Vega Red on White (Ortega and Fondeur 1982, 249). Ceramics were routinely washed and classified, and a provisional ceramics storage deposit was set up with shelving to temporarily store the catalogued material. Tables were set up to restore and put together the unearthed ceramic objects González 1977b). Excavated ceramics were marked with the section in which they were found using India ink and covered with clear nail polish. Finds were counted and recorded on the excavation forms (Bueno 1980). Special finds received an individual form (Bueno 1980). A large number of metallic objects were also found, including close to 800 nails (Pimentel 1978a). All materials were to be sent to the Museo de las Casas Reales for storage (González 1977a).

Meanwhile, Gonzalez was more interested in the built elements found within the Fort area or campus. By May 1977, the following features had been identified (González 1977b):

- Aqueduct system
- Human burial with ceramics
- Fort floor
- Traces of wooden flooring
- Traces of wooden postholes
- Carved stones (for lintels?)

In spite of being limited to the area which contains the Fort, the first excavation stage yielded an extraordinary amount of data. Most of it is recorded and available in Ortega and Fondeur 1982.

3.9.2 Fort Excavation Second Stage: Plan Experimental (Aug.-Oct. 1977)

In June 1977, the site became part of the Dirección Nacional de Parques of the Dominican Republic (Kulstad 2008, 96; Torres-Petitón 2009, 176), after Pres. Balaguer named it one of three historic parks in the country (Torres-Petitón 1988, 2009, 176). No longer under the jurisdiction of the Museo de las Casas Reales (or the Museo del Hombre Dominicano), this next stage of excavations, known as the Plan Experimental, was conducted under the supervision of Archaeologist Jose Maria Cruxent. Work was conducted from August through October 1977 (Ortega 1977), in an area that extended beyond the Fort to include the paths connecting it to the Aljibe and the Carretera La

Vega-Moca (Pimentel 1978b). Ortega was no longer in charge of the excavations at Concepción, instead being involved in the second stage of the excavations in the Mellacoid sites nearby (Veloz-Maggiolo et al. 1981).

Independent reports by Cruxent and Ortega describing the excavation methods used during this period give insight into how excavations occurred during this stage (Cruxent 1977b; Ortega 1977). It is obvious they disagreed on how excavations should be conducted, and this conflict influenced the way Architect Gonzalez later handled the site excavations.

After the first few weeks of work, Cruxent decided to re-train the workers according to his methodology (Ortega 1977; Pimentel 1977). This training included the use of natural stratigraphy in excavations (González 1981, 2); leaving artifact cleaning and classification for rainy days; sifting of all material; excavation to bedrock (as opposed to just the Spanish floor); excavation of the complete 5m2, as opposed to doing test pits to see if there is material present (Ortega 1977).

Cruxent mentions instituting certain classification forms to be filled out about the material, as well as training of the use of field logs (Cruxent 1977a). He stated he was trying to implement systematic, responsible, archaeological work, as opposed to the finding of objects for collectors (Cruxent 1977a).

The point of greatest conflict between Cruxent and Ortega appears to have been where to leave the excavated materials (Cruxent 1977b; Ortega 1977). Apparently, all excavated materials were left within the excavated units, usually on top of unearthed walls (Cruxent 1977b; Ortega 1977). Ortega was concerned that these objects (stones, bricks, ceramics, etc.) could be lost during the normal movement of excavated earth (Ortega 1977). Cruxent, on the other hand, preferred to keep the excavated materials from each unit close by to be eventually used by the architect in the building reconstruction (Cruxent 1977b). It must be noted that Cruxent does not mention where artifacts should be stored, but a report from a Comission from the Museo de Casas Reales suggests the creation of an in-situ museum and storage facility (Santiago 1977).

In terms of the material recovered, little information is available, except for the finding of large numbers of nails (Pimentel 1978a). However, there is no information about whether these were modern or from the 16th century. Most of them came from an area of wooden homes found adjacent to the fort (Pimentel 1978a).

There is some information about finding different floor levels within the Fort, as well as paved paths, and more La Vega transcultural ceramics (Ortega 1977), but most of the information of the period about these excavations are Ortega's concerns about Cruxent's methodology. His main concern seems to be one of time and funds. He believed Cruxent was working too slowly and that excavation work would not be completed in the six years allotted (Ortega 1977). He was also concerned about the amount of archaeological artifacts accumulating without cleaning or classification. Another concern was that Cruxent seemed to have left some of the excavation units

open, or at least to the Spanish floor level (Ortega 1977). He did state, however, that the classification forms used to document the data were appropriate for the task (Ortega 1977).

3.9.3 Fort Excavation Third Stage: Dic. 1977-July 1979

There is sparse information about this period, with only one set of field notes available - although there should be at least 2 sets per year according to Cruxent (Bueno 1980). It appears that work during this period was mostly supervised by Pablo Diaz, who was substituting for Architect Gonzalez, with some suggestions for expediting the work coming from Veloz-Maggiolo in Sept. 1978 (Bueno 1978). Gonzalez was away in Mexico, studying Conservation Architecture (Díaz 1978).

There is evidence that both the Spiral and Ortega grid systems were used during this period, and even simultaneously after Aug. 1978 (Bueno 1978). It appears that the Ortega grid system was used within the Fort building itself, while the Spiral Grid nomenclature was used for the units found in the surrounding areas and paths (Bueno 1978).

It appears that excavation returned to arbitrary levels during this period. There appears to be some evidence that the fort area (owned at the time by Florentino Romero) had more, deeper, material than the units found in the path area (González 1979). Great effort was made to backfill excavations to Spanish floor levels due to water filled holes which would wash away parts of the site (Díaz 1978).

The available field notes mention a suggestion by Veloz-Maggiolo to limit the marking of artifacts to Saturdays (Bueno 1978). There is also a suggestion to not spend time specifying work done in the lab in the field notebooks (Bueno 1978).

Although there is little information about the material found during this period, there does appear to have been enough information from the earlier stages to be able to identify which excavation units belonged, or did not belong, within the Fort building itself.

3.10 Monasterio de San Francisco Fort Excavation

In mid-1979, excavation in the Fort area had to be stopped due to problems with landowners (Vásquez 1991). Fortunately, 23 tareas of land holding the Franciscan Monastery were ceded to the government soon after, and work was transferred to this “campus” (Fig. 3) (Vásquez 1991). At this point the scope of the project was reformulated, aiming for the creation of a medium sized historical park attractive to potential tourists coming for the 1992 Quincentenary celebrations (González 1980). This park would have extended from the Rio Verde ovens in Cutupú to the Santo Cerro (roughly 5 km away) (González 1980). Excavations would be ongoing, with no end date, as they were to have been a tourist attraction (Abreu 2015).

3.10.1 Monasterio de San Francisco Excavation First Stage (A and B): Aug. 9, 1979-May 1980

After totally clearing the land, work was started at the Monasterio de San Francisco on Aug. 9, 1979 (González 1981). Work was briefly disrupted at the end of that same month by Hurricane David (González 1981), but the hurricane does not seem to have caused mayor damages to the area, since work was restarted before the end of September (González 1981).

Two different grids were implemented at the Monasterio de San Francisco during this stage (Bueno 1980) (See Table 3-1):

- Stage 1 A: Aug. 1979-Feb. 1980 - named by letters of the alphabet. This will be referred to in this research as the “Alphabet” Grid.

- Stage 1 B: Feb. 1980-May 1980- named by letters of the Alphabet with an additional number afterwards. This will be referred to in this research as the “Alphabet Integer.”

It is unclear who led the excavations during both of these stages, and there appears to have been little archaeological supervision. Although the records show that the excavation units were 5 x 5m2, there are no maps showing were these units actually were, or the point from where they were measured (Rosado 1979). Apparently, units were surveyed before they were dug (Bueno 1980). The artificial levels dug were 0.50 m deep each (Bueno 1980).

Since this was the first systematic excavation at the Monasterio de San Francisco campus, large amounts of material were found, including most of the skeletal remains currently on display at the Monasterio de San Francisco campus (Bueno 1980). All non-skeletal material was sent to the Museo de las Casas Reales for curation (Coste 1982; Vásquez 1991).

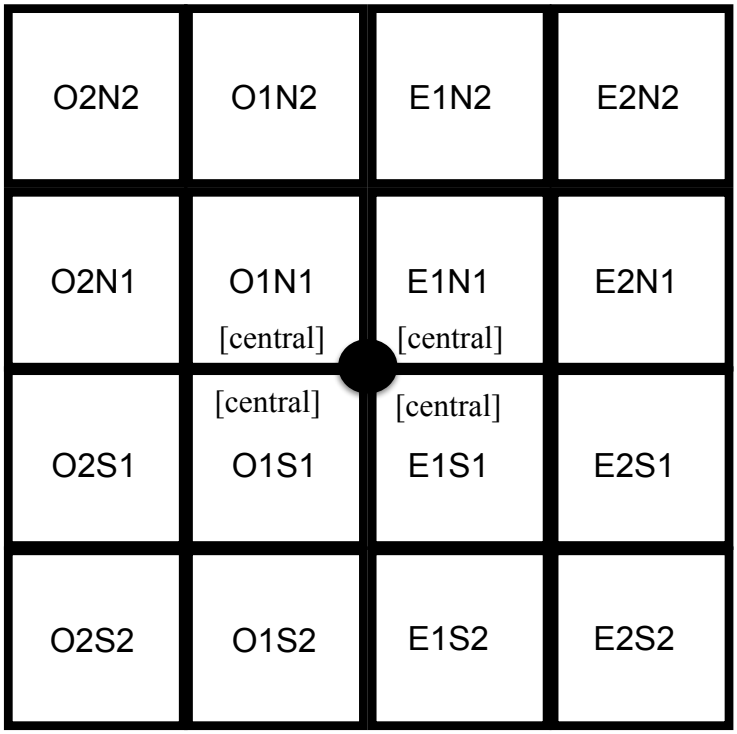
3.10.2 Monasterio de San Francisco Excavation Second Stage: Trench Survey (May-June 1980)

In May 1980, a new grid and excavation methodology were instituted (González 1981). It may have been related to a new visit by Cruxent. The purpose of this new methodology was to determine:

- Indigenous area of the campus (related to skeletal remains in fetal position)
- Spanish masonry construction areas
- Trash areas, including ceramics and faunal remains

The grid system instituted for this survey was one with East-West integers and North-South integers that increased numerically from a central block as you moved Este (East), Oeste (West), Norte (North) or Sur (South). These units were labeled binominally

by either E or W first and N or S second. Each adjacent block would be named according to the direction it lay relative to the Central Point. The label refers to the whole unit (Cohen 1997a). For the purposes of this research, this grid system will be referred to as the “Monasterio de San Francisco E-W/N-S Integers Grid.” A sample block would look like this:



A blueprint of how this grid was laid out over the existing structural remains of the Monasterio de San Francisco is available at the Bienes Culturales Office (González 1983). Once the grid was implemented, a series of 1m x 5m trenches were dug, running along the eastern wall of each 5 x 5m delimited units (González 1981). A total of seven trenches were dug to identify architectural remains and determine “whether there was more than one settlement at the campus” (González 1981).

There appears to be some attempt during this stage to identify whether there were separate Indigenous and Spanish settlement areas (González 1981), but there is no documentation regarding whether this aim was achieved.

3.10.3 Monasterio de San Francisco Excavation Third Stage:(July 1980-Dec. 1981)

It appears that during the beginning of this period, Cruxent developed a series of classification forms and a methodology which were implemented and followed by Gonzalez. Among these was the designation of units as belonging to Construcción [Construction] or Basurero [Trash Pit] (Bueno 1981) (Fig. 5).

There was an attempt in May 1981 by two archaeological technicians (Fabio Pimentel and Juan Rosado), with the support of archaeologist Veloz-Maggiolo to modify the methodology (Bueno 1981), but this was only implemented for a few weeks.

The “Monasterio de San Francisco E-W/N-S Integers Grid” continued to be used at the Monasterio de San Francisco campus during this period. There is documentation that a topographic survey was done in 1981, but there is no evidence that this caused a change in the grid system used (González 1981).

All excavations in this period were done at a 5m x 5m scale, although there is some doubt as to the depth of each discrete excavation unit, since there was some attempt to implement natural stratigraphy again, as suggested by Cruxent, but this appears to have been abandoned later (González 1981).

Here we find a description of the work crews involved for the first time. Each unit was worked on by one technician and two workers (González 1981). There is also a description of the forms that must be filled out:

- Excavation Form, which includes a vertical section of the unit wall at a 1:50 scale, as well as a horizontal scale drawing at a 1:75 scale. It includes the following information: Site, Identification number, Section, Level, Date, Excavator, Soils, Observations, Artifacts, Form number and a place to record related forms.

- Drawings to scale that include measurements of levels on all four walls.

Once again, there was some concern with excavations taking too long. In May 1981, archaeological technicians Pimentel and Rosado, along with Veloz-Maggiolo, suggested that the material not be sifted as a way to expedite work (Bueno 1981). This

was only done for a short time (González 1981), though it is uncertain why this was not implemented.

Although there is documentary evidence that at the beginning of this period the recovered materials were curated on-site (González 1981), it appears that by the end of the period, most of the classification and labeling was being done at the Museo de las Casas Reales (Coste 1982). However, there is evidence that the material returned to the site in the early 1990s may correspond to this period (Coste 2015). It must be noted, though, that the more complete objects were kept at the Museo de las Casas Reales, and make up a large portion of their exhibited ceramics (Coste 2015).

3.11 Architectural Interpretation of the Concepción Landscape – González/Pérez-Montás 1984

In 1984, Architect Eugenio Pérez-Montás, interested in studying the origins of the grid town pattern layout in the Americas, published the first interpretation of Concepción's landscape layout. Although he personally seemed to agree with Palm's interpretation (Palm 1955a, 46-47) that there was a lack of evidence to determine a grid layout, he did present González's interpretation of the existence of an Iberian Grid Plan layout (Pérez-Montás 1984, 82). González proposed a 2-block rectangle layout occupied by the Cathedral and the Plaza de Armas. The Town Hall is to the south of the Cathedral, and to its west is the Fort, located at the highest point. The fort bordered Indigenous cropland and housing (Pérez-Montás 1984, 82).

3.12 Return to the Fort (1983-1995)

3.12.1 Fort Excavation Fourth Stage: March 1983-April 1985

During this time period, work returned to the Fort campus and focused on the Fort building itself. The work was, once again, advised by Cruxent, at the time working in Santo Domingo (Pimentel 1984).

Unfortunately, apparently due to Cruxent's influence, an "E-W/N-S Integers Grid" was also instituted here in this period. This complicated interpretation in this dissertation research because it was difficult to separate which units were excavated at the Fort, and which were excavated at the Monasterio de San Francisco, simply by using their nomenclature. Fortunately, the use of excavation dates solved this problem.

Another unfortunate happening during this period was the continued use of artificial levels, this time being 50 cm deep, as opposed to 25 cm, as had been the norm during the earlier excavations at the fort campus.

Most of the information from this time period comes from the field notebooks, but which give little information about material curation. There was a field office with a small

storage room at the site during this period (Abreu 2015), and it appears that the material was stored there without curation, uncleaned and unmarked.

3.12.2 Fort Excavation Fifth Stage: April 1985-1995

The excavations during this period focused on other building structures outside the fort structure, within the Fort campus (Fig. 6). Work during this period was greatly affected by González's declining health and eventual replacement in 1992 (Vásquez 1992). Work continued haphazardly under the direction of Technician Serafín Vásquez until excavations were officially halted in 1995 (Pimentel 1997).

In 1987, work was started on a new cement annex at the site, with storage and a small, on-site museum (González 1988). During its construction, from April through October 1987, excavations were halted (González 1988). In November and December 1987, an inventory was made of the artifact bags stored at the site. They were classified in the following manner (González 1988):

- Referenced material (437 bags)
- Washed material (45 bags)
- Material from the First Period (1977-1979) (25 bags)
- Unwashed material (211 bags)
- Materials perturbed by mice, without reference card (71 bags)

All of this material was stored in the new storage facility, inaugurated in 1988 (González 1989). Also, the backlog in material classification continued. A note from Sept. 1989 said the Spanish material was classified first, before the Indigenous (Bueno 1989).

In 1991, during Gonzalez's illness, Archaeology Technician Serafin Vasquez substituted for him (Vásquez 1991). The "Fort E-W/N-S Integers Grid" continued to be used. He returned to arbitrary levels 25 cm in depth due to collapsing walls and prioritized the location of Spanish floor levels and masonry walls (Vásquez 1991).

During this stage, González and Pimentel (1990) proposed that the city was bounded by the Fort on the northern-most point, the San Francisco Monastery as the southern-most, the Carretera Moca as the eastern limit, and the mountains and aljibe (cistern) forming the western limit. Another assessment keeps the same northern, western and eastern limits, but extends the southern boundary for some 5 kilometers south to a place called Piralejos, and includes the Santo Cerro (Abreu 1998; Kulstad 2008, 98; Pimentel 1997). There is little physical evidence, however, to support these proposed limits (Deagan 1999; Kulstad 2008, 98).

3.13 University of Florida 1996-1999: Project for the Conservation and Development of the Rural, Physical and Human Resources at the Parques Nacionales of the Dominican Republic: La Isabela and Concepción de la Vega)

Until 1996, archaeology at Concepción had been focused on the visible monumental structure and had made no attempt to delineate site boundaries. At the same time, more than 200,000 recovered artifacts lay in storage without classification. The University of Florida and the Dominican government considered that these two areas of missing information needed to be tackled before any additional in-depth excavations could be done, and these two concerns became the two goals of a joint venture, undertaken between 1996 and 1999 (Cohen 1997; Deagan and Cruxent 2002a, 278; Kulstad 2008; Woods 1998).

The project's specific objectives were:

- Definition of site boundaries through a sub-surface survey
- Recovery and classification of artifacts found from 1976-1994

Priority was given to demarcating the site's limits through a new survey which did not rely on previous research, and the creation of a quantitative database of the previously excavated material (Deagan 1999; Woods 1998).

From 1996 to 1998, the University of Florida archaeology team, working with a team of 25 local residents, surveyed and mapped the Concepción area, with the purpose of delineating the boundaries and internal organization of the city of Concepción (Deagan and Cruxent 2002a, 278; Kulstad 2008, 98). Although some attempt was made to continue the use of the previous gridding system, the difficulties in replicating previous work (Woods 1998) prompted the introduction of a systematic subsurface survey program similar to the ones carried out at two other 16th century settlements on Hispaniola - La Isabela (on the north coast of the Dominican Republic) and Puerto Real (on the north coast of Haiti) (Deagan and Cruxent 2002a, 283). In this research, this Grid will be known as the "UF Survey Grid."

The Survey Grid implemented by the University of Florida team was a modified Chicago grid system of Cartesian coordinates which provided horizontal control for the survey, and facilitated input of newly excavated materials data into computerized mapping programs (Deagan 1999, 16, 24; Kulstad 2008, 101). This grid shares the same Meridian and Baseline point of all the grids implemented in the Fort. The local site datum (key stake) is inside the fort on the East-West baseline and was designated 4000N 4000E. Permanent datum points were also put in place to facilitate future reconstruction of the grid (Deagan 1999, 16; Kulstad 2008, 99).

Test pits (sondeos) were excavated at every accessible 10m grid intersect (Cohen 1997b; Kulstad 2008, 100; Woods 1999). By 1997, the team had identified a preponderance of material clustered around the fort, as opposed to the Monasterio de

San Francisco, and focused their efforts in that area (Woods 1997). A total of 1,625 test pits were excavated between 1996 and 1998 (Deagan 1999, 19; Woods 1999). Beginning at the fort, they were excavated in all directions until at least three units in a line were found to be culturally sterile. A large area at the site's center remains un-surveyed, due to the fact that property owners would not give permission for excavations. Much of the central residential portion of the city, including the Cathedral, is believed to have been located there (Deagan 1999, 19). Other untested areas included the area beneath the Carretera Moca, and what is beneath the modern buildings to the east of that highway (Deagan 1999, 19; Kulstad 2008, 100).

Each test pit itself was 25 cm by 25 cm square, and 1 meter deep, or until bedrock or culturally sterile soil was reached (Deagan 1999, 17). The material recovered was screened through ¼ inch wire mesh. Everything, including rocks, modern objects, wood, etc., was retained and bagged together and labeled (date of excavation, North and East coordinates), and given a unique field-specimen number (FS#) (Deagan 1999, 17; Kulstad 2008, 100).

The bags were then taken to the field laboratory, where all recovered items were cleaned. Masonry construction materials such as bricks, roofing tiles, rock and mortar, were weighed in grams and discarded once their weights had been recorded by locally trained field technicians (Deagan 1999, 17; Kulstad 2008, 100). Woods (1998) identified, counted, analyzed and recorded the rest of the cultural material. All artifacts recovered are currently stored at the on-site museum at the Concepción National Park, with copies of the records at the Florida Museum of National History at the University of Florida.

The data on the forms was then entered into computerized database and mapping programs (PARADOX and SURFER) to create a series of artifact distribution maps to be used in more in-depth site assessments (see Cohen 1997b; Deagan 1999, 18; Kulstad 2008, 101; Woods 1999).

The second goal of the University of Florida intervention was the recovery and classification of the artifacts excavated from 1976-1994, and create a computerized database of all the materials found. Additionally, it was necessary to appropriately storage these same materials to facilitate their study (Deagan 1999; Kulstad 2008, 99).

The first step was to attempt to organize of the site's excavation documents (Deagan 1999, 23; Kulstad 2008, 101). Unfortunately, the team had little access to this material, especially due to Gonzalez's illness (Pimentel 1997). Of special interest was an attempt to unify all earlier grids with the new "UF Survey Grid" (Cohen 1997b). However, due to this being a time-consuming process, this process was left to the end of the project, and only partially achieved (Woods 1999).

Meanwhile, all the artifact bags were re-labeled using a Field Specimen number (FS#) and added to a newly created FS# catalog (Deagan 1999, 24). Many bags included their previous excavation data, and this was added to the computerized

database (Deagan 1999, 23). A catalogue of proveniences defined during the Park Service excavations was compiled (Deagan and Kulstad 1998, 3). It assumes that all items with the same FS share the same space and temporality. FS numbers were assigned to similarly labeled material at the site, although it was necessary to consolidate some of the numbers due to having overlapping excavations. Currently there are close to 900 FS numbers, including over 278,000 artifacts (Deagan 1999, 24).

Next, artifacts were washed and classified quantitatively (Deagan and Kulstad 1998, 3). Local high school students were hired and trained to classify the material under the supervision of Hipólito Abreu, Fabio Pimentel, and Pauline Kulstad (Deagan and Kulstad 1998, 7). Masonry construction materials such as bricks, roofing tiles, rock and mortar, were weighed in grams and discarded once their weights had been recorded (Deagan 1999, 17). The rest of the cultural material was classified into general categories similar to the ones used at La Isabela using general material and functional categories (Deagan and Cruxent 2002a, 281; Kulstad 2008, 101).

Since the focus of the University of Florida/Dominican National Park Service was to identify features at the site level, no effort was made to precisely plot the previously excavated materials at a building and/or campus-wide level. All material, including the conserved objects, were stored at the on-site museum at the Concepción National Park. The special artifacts worthy of exhibit were stored in special secure cabinets built as part of the Project (Kulstad 2008, 102).

The survey suggested that 16th century Concepción extended approximately 400 m north-south and 640 m east-west, for an area of more than 250,000 m2, making it the largest European settlement in the Americas until the 1520s (Deagan 1999, 19). The structural remains of the fort, the cathedral and other structures around the Plaza de Armas suggest a rectilinear organization of the site (Deagan 1999, 20). Distribution maps were created from the material found in the survey, including (Deagan 1999; Woods 1998):

- Masonry building materials
- 16th century ceramics
- Aboriginal wares
- Slag remains

Unfortunately, the project was unable to unify the various grids used at the site. This meant that it was difficult to provenience most of the pre-1995 material.

The second aim of the project, namely the organization of pre-1995, artifacts managed to store and preliminarily classify all materials by type, at the attribute level, according to the Florida Museum of Natural History system (Deagan 1999). This classification system is based on the work undertaken by Goggin (1968) and is explained in Deagan's two volumes (1987 and 2002a).

An effort was made to divide faunal remains from other artifacts since mice seem to be more attracted to them. The non-bone materials were stored in the Wooden Park's office, while the bones were stored in the deposit in the cement structure. However, all of the classification forms were digitized onto a database available at the Florida Museum of Natural History. An interpretation of the findings of this project is found in Deagan and Cruxent 2002a.

3.14 Concepción de La Vega 1495-1564: A Preliminary Look at Lifeways in the Americas' First Boom Town (Kulstad 2008)

In 2008, Kulstad presented a Master's thesis which used an anthropological/ historical approach to attempt to recreate the lifeways of the inhabitants at Concepción. Historical documentation and archaeological data gathered through the University of Florida 1996-1999 Project, particularly the Survey Materials Distribution Maps, were interpreted to attempt to identify activity areas and buildings within the complete Concepción site from 1494-1564, at a site-wide scale. As happened with the University of Florida Project, this thesis prioritized the Concepción city center and the built structures of that area, neglecting the Monasterio de San Francisco.

However, several potential building locations were identified, with special focus on identifying the site hospital. An attempt to plot health related artifacts using the UF Survey nomenclature suggested this building could be found in the southeast corner of the Fort campus (Kulstad 2008, 122).

3.15 Transfer to the Ministry of Culture (2010)

With the creation of the Ministry of Environment in 2000 (Duval 2017), the Concepción site no longer fit the National Park criteria and was transferred to the Ministry of Culture. It was incorporated in 2010, after seven years of unofficial affiliation (Abreu 2016). During a visit to the site by Patrimonio Monumental authorities it was determined that it was necessary to tear down the Park office's wooden structure due to termite damage. All of the stored archaeological material bags were taken to an unfinished second floor of the Cement annex with no windows or doors, with their empty storage boxes stored in the downstairs bone deposit. Also, the Especiales materials were taken out of the wooden storage drawers and placed in the upstairs room without special care.

3.16 NEXUS1492: Kulstad Dissertation Research (2013-2016)

The research undertaken is related to the first NEXUS 1492 Project objective, which is to provide a new perspective on the very first encounters between the New World and the Old World. The dissertation research has followed a trans-disciplinary research design, using various avenues of inquiry, to target the intercultural nexus of

colonial encounters and Amerindian-African-European dynamics. This research was undertaken with the help and collaboration of Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic/Patrimonio Monumental Office, the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, Fomento Turistico de la Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo Project of the Ministry of Tourism of the Dominican Republic, the Academy of Sciences of the Dominican Republic, and the Florida Museum of Natural History of the University of Florida. All of these institutions formed a synergy web which supported this research, particularly since the data used for this research is partially archived at each of these centers.

As part of this research, Kulstad, along with Pierre Denis, Frank Coste, Santiago Duval, Pablo Coste, Hipolito Abreu, Francisco Polanco, Junior, and Domingo Abreu, attempted to recreate and update the storage system implemented by the University of Florida. More specifically, cardboard boxes were substituted with museum-grade plastic boxes, and broken plastic bags were substituted. Both bags and boxes were generously provided by the NEXUS1492 project.

The upgrade allowed for the minimization of storage space, allowing for the storage of most materials in the cement building. The organization of material by FS order allowed for its its subsequent use by other NEXUS1492 researchers (Ernst 2017).

Although information and artifacts from the 1976-1995 excavations were tracked down by Kulstad in the Dominican Republic, other information and artifacts were not so readily available. In two subsequent trips to the University of Florida (2013, 2017), the archaeological documents related to the University of Florida investigation from 1996-1999 were found at the Florida Museum of Natural History. The Florida Museum of Natural History also houses the material excavated by Goggin at both Concepción and other similar Circum-Caribbean collections, which were used for comparison purposes (see Chapters 6 and 7). Information about the Goggin archaeological excavations were found at the Smathers Library Special Collections (University of Florida).

3.17 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to chronicle the archaeological interventions undertaken in at the Concepción site, in chronological order. Where possible, the purposes, biases and limitations of each of these efforts have been presented. It is possible to discern that excavation in the 19th century was more focused on artifact recovery, but the more architectural focus of the 20th century excavations allowed for more attention to landscape.

This focus at the building scale has been a more useful for the present research than the traditional artifact-oriented approach, since it created documentation which allowed for easier identification of artifact provenience. These included the identification of nine grid systems, and the recreation of the Ortega and Fort E-W/N-S Integers Grid (at the Fort), and the Monasterio de San Francisco E-W/N-S Integers Grid.

Although the recovered excavation information (particularly from 1976-1995) is incomplete, it has been possible to ascertain enough excavation methodology to know that sifting was used fairly consistently (although the mesh gauge size is unknown), most of the site was excavated following artificial stratigraphy, and did not go to bedrock, but rather to the Spanish building masonry floors. This means that the cultural material assemblage temporally comes from the approximately 70 years of European occupation (1495-1564), with few instances of pre-contact intrusions, mostly related to skeletal remains (this will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7).

Due to the architectural bias, all excavation units where building foundations were found were completely excavated. This resulted in a large, detailed, collection of cultural materials, most probably deposited during the 1562 earthquake. The assemblage includes more than 280,000 artifacts, and 1,158 kg of weighed material (shell, bone, tile, and construction material) (Deagan and Kulstad 1998, 7). However, in terms of landscape, this resulted in little focus on non-building areas and difficulty in identifying more activity areas within the site.

The archaeological information presented in this chapter will be combined with information from other avenues of inquiry (such as historical documents and oral history) to interpret intercultural interactions at Concepción. The next chapter will focus on pertinent historical events which occurred, both in the Americas and in Europe, that influenced these interactions.